



INTRODUCTION

WHY THIS BOOK, AND WHY ME?

Welcome to *The Co-Teacher's Playbook: What It Takes to Make Co-Teaching Work for Everyone*. I'd like to introduce you to this book and to me in this short introduction.

I've been an educator since 1986, and I've served in a huge variety of roles. For the last fifteen years, I've been a full-time author and consultant, and in that capacity, I've supported hundreds of teachers, many of whom are in co-teaching relationships. In the seventeen years prior to my consulting career, I was a teacher, administrator, and instructional coach. During two of my years as a high school English teacher, I was part of a co-teaching team, paired with a special education teacher each time.

My co-teaching experience had ups and downs. Both of my special education partners were a joy to collaborate with, but we struggled with the same issues I see

many teams struggling with today—communication between us, communication with parents, equitable grading, a lack of planning time, and the list goes on.

Based on my own co-teaching journey and how it has intersected with and informed my consulting, I offer this book to you so that you can become more effective at any point in a co-teaching situation. This book is intended to be most useful if read together by a co-teaching pair so that both teachers can discuss the information, complete the activities, and use the tools. You'll find that the text is meant to be conversational and direct in speaking to you, and you'll see that the various activities and tools are meant to be used as you best see fit. The overarching goal is for you and your co-teaching partner to use this book as a vital support in your ongoing professional growth.

You may have had time to plan and prepare for a new school year ahead of time as a co-teaching pair, or you may have just had the arrangement sprung upon you with seemingly no lead time. Either situation is fine. I'll strive to present the ideal scenarios within this book, but I'll also make every effort to address the not-so-ideal situations that I see many of my teaching colleagues in.

The book consists of four distinct types of material:

1. Text
2. Activities
3. Tools
4. Extensions

Text often appears first in each chapter and consists of necessary information and explanation. So, text might include definitions, characteristics, summary, and even vignettes of effective or ineffective co-teaching. Text tees up what follows (activities, tools, and extensions) and often also provides some instruction to be applied in the activities and via the tools.

Most activities are designed to be completed individually either during or after the reading of the text, as indicated by their placement. Ideally, co-teaching partners will discuss their responses. Some activities are designed to be completed with your co-teaching partner or to be used in a group setting. All the activities are intended to get you processing the content of the text at a deeper level and personalizing it to your unique situation.

Tools are lists, checklists, letters, templates, agreements, and other documents to be directly applied to the day-to-day workings of co-teaching. You can use the documents exactly as they appear or choose to modify them to best fit your unique situation. Both reproducible "as is" and changeable versions of the forms appear online at <http://resources.corwin.com/coteachersplaybook>.

Extensions are recommended readings and activities that take you beyond the text and deeper into content you may be interested in. Each extension includes at least a

brief annotation or summary and recommendations for how it could be used by you and your co-teaching partner.

This book is designed to be worked through from beginning to end with your co-teaching partner. If you are part of more than one co-teaching partnership, you may find that it's easiest (and most valuable) to explore the text and work through the exercises with only one co-teaching partner at a time. If you choose to read the book with more than one co-teaching partner, or if you're part of a book study or a class using the book, you'll find that the text portions and recommended readings may be most meaningful for group discussion.

Co-teaching can be one of the most powerful professional learning experiences of your career. However, for many co-teaching pairs, there can be confusion and frustration at times. This book will provide you with information and interactive tools that are intended to reduce confusion and frustration and to buoy you toward your highest level of effectiveness.

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